

Learning Centers program, under the leadership of Education Secretary Richard Riley, we are providing schools and community organizations with funding to create and expand learning opportunities for children in a drug-free, supervised environment. This program enables schools to stay open longer so that students have places to do their homework, receive counseling about the dangers of substance abuse, and participate with mentors in a wide array of academic and recreational activities that challenge their imagination and broaden their horizons.

In the 4 years since we created the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, hundreds of thousands of children across our country have enrolled in safe and smart afterschool programs. My proposed budget for fiscal 2001 will more than double the Federal commitment to this program, enabling us to reach as many as 2.5 million students next year. These community learning centers provide America's parents with the comforting assurance that, while they are out earning a living, their children are participating in engaging and constructive afterschool activities.

To highlight the growing need for afterschool programs, the Afterschool Alliance—a partnership of public, private, and non-profit organizations dedicated to raising awareness and expanding resources for afterschool programs—has announced a nationwide project called “Lights On Afterschool!” On October 12 of this year, schools, community centers, museums, libraries, and parks across the country will host activities to inform families about the places currently open to children after school and the need to provide additional centers where children can participate in engaging, stimulating activities until their parents return from work.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of October 8 to October 14, 2000, as Afterschool Week. I encourage parents, students, educators, community and business leaders, and concerned citizens to participate in “Lights On Afterschool!” activities on Thursday, October 12. I also urge all Americans to recog-

nize the importance of providing afterschool programs in their communities to promote the safety and well-being of our Nation's children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 11, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 12.

Proclamation 7354—Fire Prevention Week, 2000

October 6, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Each year, fire takes a heavy toll on the lives and property of thousands of Americans. Approximately 100 firefighters and 4,000 civilians die in fires annually; some 25,000 civilians sustain injuries and an average of \$8 billion in property is destroyed. Last year alone, America's fire departments responded to almost 2 million fires. Most of these fires occurred in homes, as did 80 percent of last year's fire fatalities. It is clear from these tragic statistics that if we can better educate Americans about fire safety and prevention, we can save thousands of lives every year.

The most important lesson we can teach about fire is how rapidly it can spread. From the time a smoke alarm sounds in a typical home, a family may have as little as 2 minutes to escape safely. Knowing how to use those minutes wisely is the key to survival. I urge every American to develop and practice regularly a home fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room and establishes a meeting place where household members can reunite outside the home. In addition, it is crucial that smoke alarms be installed

and properly maintained on every level of the home.

To raise public awareness of the importance of home fire escape plans, the National Fire Protection Association, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency through its United States Fire Administration and America's fire departments, launched a 3-year program in 1998 called "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" To date, this program is credited with saving at least 58 lives. In support of this program, on Wednesday, October 11, at 7:00 p.m. local time, fire departments in communities across America will sound the alarm signaling the start of "The Great Escape" fire drill to test the effectiveness of families' fire escape plans. I encourage all Americans to participate in this important and potentially life-saving event.

As we observe this week, let us also express our pride in and gratitude for the devoted service of our Nation's firefighters and emergency response personnel. They uphold our country's finest values—commitment and community, teamwork and trust, courage and sacrifice. Day in and day out, these extraordinary men and women put their lives on the line to protect our families and our property from the devastating effects of fire, and many of them pay the ultimate price for their devotion. We will honor their memory on Sunday, October 8, 2000, at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 8 through October 14, 2000, as Fire Prevention Week. I encourage the people of the United States to take an active role in fire prevention not only during this week, but also throughout the year. I call upon every citizen to pay tribute to our firefighters and emergency response personnel who have lost their lives or been injured in the line of duty and to those brave men and women who carry on their noble tradition of service.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the

Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

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Proclamation 7355—National School Lunch Week, 2000

October 6, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

One of the best ways we can move forward as a society is to meet our obligations to our children. President Harry Truman recognized this profound responsibility when he signed the National School Lunch Act into law in 1946. The significance of this legislation went beyond the daily meal that children would receive; the National School Lunch Program firmly established the Federal Government's commitment to work in partnership with States, schools, and the agricultural community to administer a major program designed to improve children's diets and, in turn, their overall health and well-being.

Today, more than 96,000 schools serve lunches to over 27 million children every day—more than half of them for free or at a reduced price, so that no schoolchild in America, regardless of family income, need go hungry at lunchtime. We have also built on the program's success by establishing a number of child nutrition initiatives administered by the Department of Agriculture—from the School Breakfast Program, which helps ensure eligible children are ready to learn; to the Summer Food Service Program, which serves healthy meals and snacks to low-income children during long school vacations; to the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides nutritious meals and snacks to infants and young children in day care and to adults with physical or mental disabilities who are enrolled in adult day